

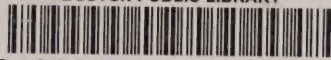
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CHANGES IN THE HISPANIC POPULATION OF BOSTON,
1970-1980

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CHANGES IN THE HISPANIC POPULATION OF BOSTON, 1970-1980

The U.S. Census counted 17,984 persons of Spanish language in 1970 and 36,068 persons of Spanish origin in 1980. Discussions with Nampeo McKenney, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, indicate that the two bases for counting are not comparable: the second definition of Hispanic captures more persons than the first, so that comparing the 1980 figure with the 1970 number leads to an overestimation of the growth in Boston's Hispanic population. However, the overcount may not be that great since the Spanish language definition designated as of Spanish language all persons in a family whose head or spouse had Spanish as a mother tongue. In any case, I am going to assume their rough comparability in order to reveal some facts about Hispanic migration brought to light by the Household Survey.

The Census count of some 36,000 Hispanics represents 6.4 percent of Boston's total 1980 population. The Boston Redevelopment Authority Household Survey, taken in Spring 1980, found 6.2 percent of household residents were Hispanic. The percentages are very close. However, the number estimated by the Household Survey is 32,500. An additional 300 Hispanics are known to be crews of vessels, numbers of Hispanics in other group quarters are very small. Therefore, one might have estimated 33,000 Hispanics from Household Survey information, eight percent or 3,000 shy of the U.S. Census count. It is possible that some, but not all of this 3,000 deficit is due to the 4,000 Black Hispanics in Boston counted by the Census. Census questions enabled respondents to identify themselves as both Black and Hispanic. The Household Survey question about race required the respondent to choose between Black or Hispanic as his/her minority designation. Some

proportion of Black Hispanics may have chosen Black rather than Hispanic, diminishing the number of Hispanics by some small number.

With these caveats about different counts in mind, let us turn to some characteristics of the Hispanic population found in the Household Survey. First, two-thirds of the Hispanic population had lived in Boston for less than ten years, indicating that two-thirds are immigrants. Second, thirty percent of the Hispanic population are under ten years of age, born since the 1970 Census was taken. Third, two-thirds of Hispanics less than eighteen years old were born in the United States and one-third abroad.

If we apply these proportions to the Census count of Hispanics, we can estimate roughly the number of net migrants and immigrants as seen in the following table.

Computation of Hispanic Migration to and from Boston,
1970-1980

36,000	Hispanics in 1980
24,000	Hispanics immigrants, 1970-1980
10,800	Hispanic children, 0-9 years, of whom 7,200 were born in the United States
18,000	1970 count
24,000	1970-1980 Hispanic immigrants
7,200	Children born in United States
<u>49,200</u>	Expected Hispanics in 1980
-36,100	1980 Hispanics counted
<u>13,100</u>	Difference--assume 13,100 Hispanics moved out
18,000	
<u>-13,100</u>	
4,900	Maximum possible number of persons over ten years who remained in Boston

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1970-1980</u>	<u>1980</u>
Population	18,000		36,100
Immigration		+24,000	
Births in U.S.		+ 7,200	
Net Stayers		4,900	
Net Leavers		-13,100	


Discussion

These computations are subject to small errors from two sources. Hispanic deaths, probably small in number, were not subtracted from the expected 1980 population. A partially compensating error may exist in that the reported proportion of two-thirds of Hispanics less than eighteen years old born in the United States may underestimate the proportion, and therefore the number, of children under ten years old born here. Despite these caveats, several conclusions about the migration of Boston's Hispanic population can safely be made.

Boston's Hispanic population is subject to a high degree of mobility. To wit, for every two Hispanics who moved into the City, one moved out. Indeed, the ratio may be higher because a ten-year span is too long to hope to identify all in- and outmigrants. So the two to one ratio is a minimum.

Examination of the immigration and outmigration rates further indicates the extent of mobility. Some 70 percent of Hispanics resident in Boston in 1970 moved out before the end of the decade, while two-thirds of those living in the City at the end of the decade had moved in.

These high mobility rates are probably the result of both the economic circumstances of Hispanics in Boston and their ethnic orientation. The tendency of Puerto Ricans, who make up nearly one-third of Boston Hispanics, to remigrate to Puerto Rico has been well documented. In addition, Hispanics may also move to Hispanic communities in other cities, some far away and some as close as suburban Chelsea, Cambridge, and Framingham.



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While there exist diverse economic circumstances among Hispanic households, the majority are not economically well off. For instance, among Hispanic families with school-aged children nearly two-thirds earned less than \$7,000 in 1979. Again, over six out of ten Hispanic families with children reported that transfer payments were their primary source of income. Therefore, financial hardship may act as an inducement to migration.



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